



SFA 00076



At Ebbets Field, to open a soccer match





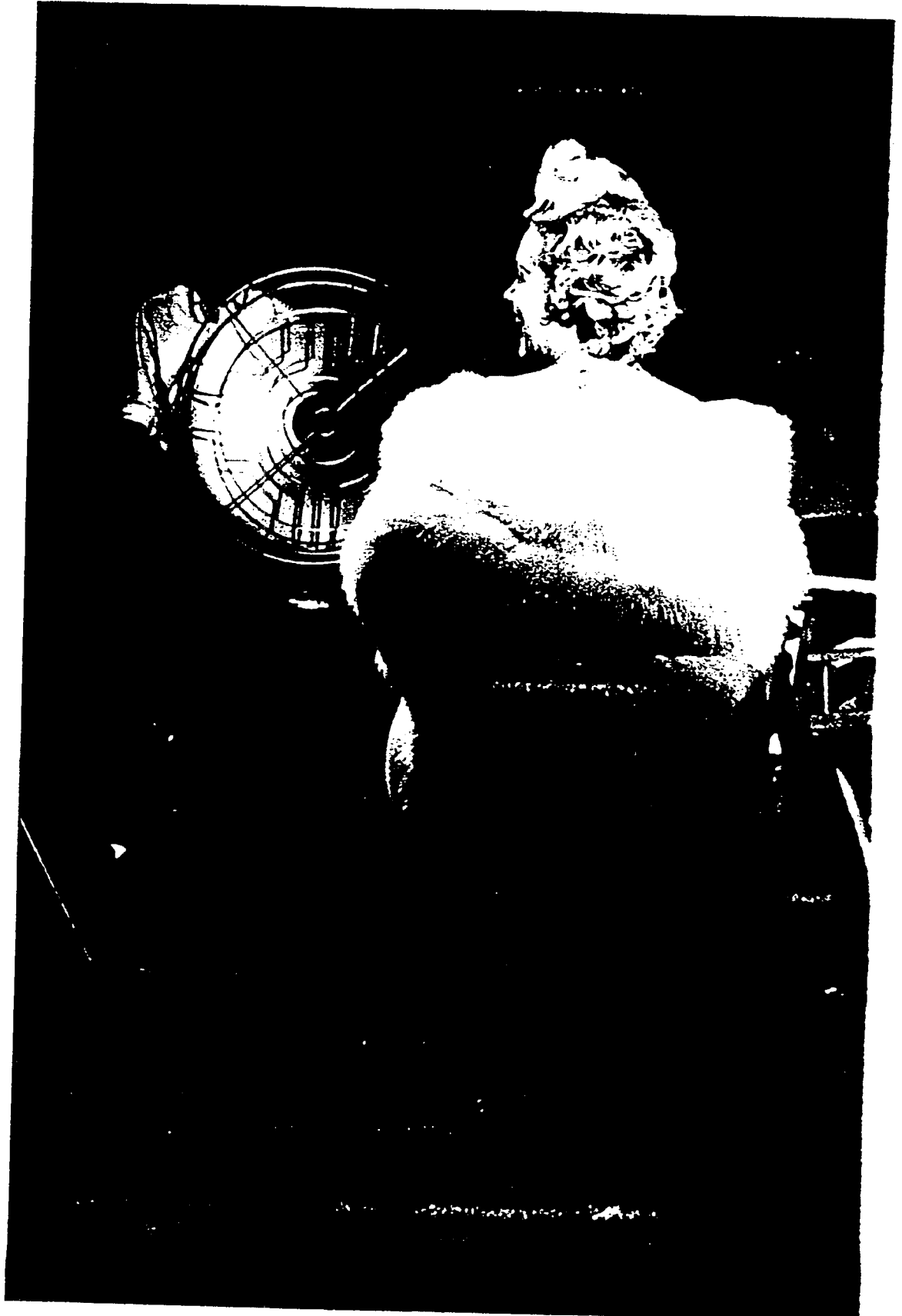




*Robert F. Wagner (l.), mayor of New York at the time of this dinner
celebrating the opening of "The Prince and the Showgirl"*

SFA 00081

One of her greatest ambitions was to appear in Vogue and Harpers Bazaar. She wanted to be sleek and fashionable, as the high fashion models were. So I introduced her to Richard Avedon; that was a high point in her life. And posing for Milton Greene for Vogue. But I don't believe Vogue used any of the photographs — they were too dramatic for them . . .



SFA 00083

In photographer Richard Avedon's studio . . . Avedon is at left.





Twentieth Century-Fox took advantage of Marilyn: she was getting into the leads, had had leads in a number of pictures. Still, they considered her a starlet, and they kept her on the old contract, whatever that was . . .

The money didn't matter that much to her when she was becoming a star. What mattered was position, to be treated in a nice way. But they treated her as if she were a kid. And they didn't show her the favors that one expects stars to receive . . .

She had made "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes," "How to Marry a Millionaire" and "The Seven Year Itch" . . . She was on the road to other things . . . And they never gave her the respect which even her box-office earning power deserved.

For example: when she broke up with Joe during the filming of "The Seven Year Itch," she registered at a hotel in Beverly Hills.

Reporters besieged her; she couldn't go to her room.

Let alone she's going through the traumatic experience of fighting with her husband, breaking up with her husband, she's also fighting the studio.

So I went to the publicity director of Twentieth Century-Fox, and I said to him, "Look, Marilyn's got to have a place where she won't be plagued by the press. Now there's an empty room, or rather an apartment, on the set — Betty Grable's apartment. Why don't you turn it over to Marilyn?"

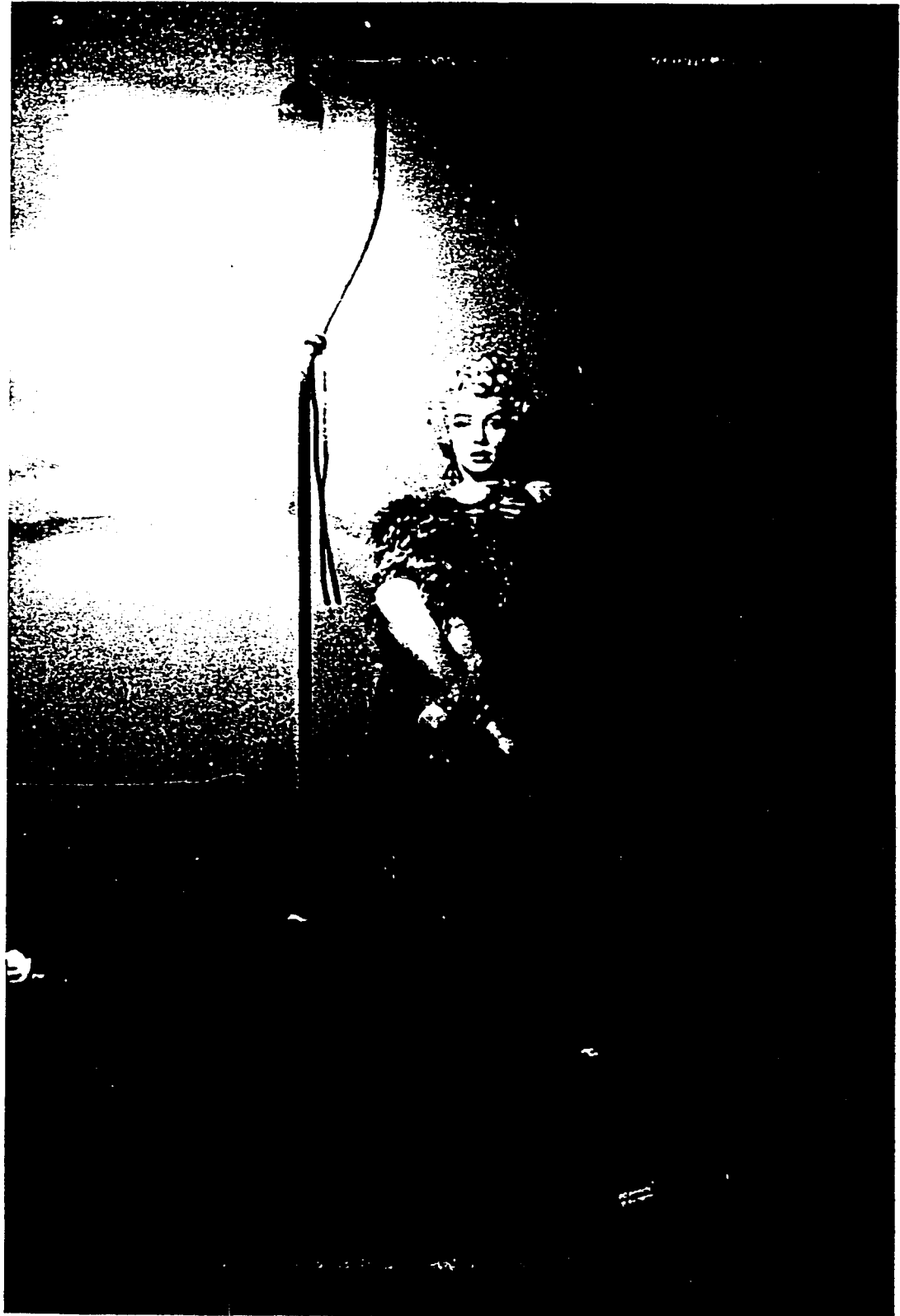
"Absolutely," he said, "absolutely! She can have it. Let her live there during the making of the picture." Yet it never occurred to the studio to let her have it.

She was thrilled.

She would have been content with a little dressing room, with a chorus girl's dressing room.

But to have this sumptuous apartment on the set, which had belonged to Betty Grable, that thrilled her more than anything else!

Grable was one of her idols . . . Jean Harlow and Jane Russell were the other two . . . Her idols, not so much because of their beauty and what they represented as stars, but for the life they had to lead to arrive there. Compromise . . . whatnot — she understood all those intimate things they experienced.



82

SFA 00088



living room

Marilyn was Hollywood. She's the most perfect example of Hollywood . . .

What is Hollywood?

A lot of corny pictures.

Some monstrous business people.

And serious filmmakers: producers, writers, directors, actors, camera and crew men — all of them wanting to do the best . . .

I've always found that even the illiterates in Hollywood try to be better than they are, strive to make a better picture . . .

Marilyn always wanted the best, too.

When she did "There's No Business Like Show Business," she had a terrible fight with the studio. I was on the set to shoot something else, not Marilyn. I'd go and see her, though, and we'd sit and have coffee.

She was fighting to bring in a choreographer named Jack Cole.

Now, at that period, Jack Cole was revolutionary. It was a way-out thing — like Barbra Streisand asking for modern dancer Merce Cunningham . . .

Marilyn didn't want whomever it was who did all the choreography then; she wanted someone with fresh ideas .

Harry Cohn, former head of Columbia Pictures; I heard he was a crude man.

I met him a couple of times and found him to be refined. A guy able to turn out cornball stuff — chase pictures and whatnot, the bread and butter stuff — and also willing to chance pictures which only with luck might break even at the box office . . .

Now here is what I mean about good and bad in Hollywood.

Marilyn was working for Columbia. A starlet. A beautiful girl, a luscious girl.

One day she gets a call to see Harry Cohn.

He said, "Listen, kid. This weekend I want you to come on my yacht."

She knew what that invitation meant. (She told me this story.)

So she answered, "Oh, Mr. Cohn, I'd love to come on your yacht this weekend and meet your wife."

"Get out," said Cohn.

By the time she got to her room, she had a pink slip. Fired.

A short while later, Arthur Miller and Elia Kazan developed a film script about the waterfront. And they

went to see Harry Cohn about doing it with Columbia.

Marilyn, Miller and Kazan were like a threesome then. Miller and Kazan each had a wild sense of humor. So the three of them stopped at an optometrist's on their way to Columbia and bought Marilyn a big pair of horn-rimmed glasses. Straight lenses.

Next they went to a stationery store and bought a steno book and pencil.

They walked into Cohn's office. Marilyn was wearing the glasses and carrying the steno notebook.

They said, "You don't mind that we picked up a stenographer from the pool? We want a record of our conversation."

Marilyn could barely write her name, let alone do shorthand.

Anyway, she began taking notes while Miller and Kazan started a very straight talk with Cohn.

They're making points, business points, story points. And

every so often they'd turn to Marilyn and say, "Miss, did you get that down?"

She'd reply, "Would you please repeat it?"

They'd repeat it. And Cohn would have to repeat what he'd said. Throughout the meeting . . .

Finally, at one point, Cohn said to her, "You look awfully familiar. Haven't I met you before?"

Besides having on those big glasses, she had changed her hair. She said, "Oh no! I'm a stenographer, a public stenographer."

And Miller and Kazan would add, "Oh no! We picked her up in the public stenographer office. Hired her for the day."

And throughout the meeting Cohn would break in, "I think I've seen you before."

When the threesome walked out, Cohn was still puzzled.

A delicious anecdote . . . They played jokes like that . . .



Marilyn shares a table with Clark Gable at a Hollywood celebrity party in her honor after the filming of "The Seven Year Itch."





George Burns (l.)

Lauren Bacall (r.) and Michael Rennie





Vilder (r., standing), director of "The Seven Year Itch"

Eventually, Marilyn found herself in the business of being a superstar. She became a business woman.

Her business partner for a while, Milton Greene, a great photographer, encouraged her; and Arthur no doubt understood what business is about.

But she laid the laws down. She became a tough, tough tomato. A tough tomato.

She became a tyrant as a producer, a big tycoon trying to lay the law down to the Hollywood bigshots. And she nearly beat them.

In today's atmosphere, with women all over demanding more rights, she would have won hands down.

She wanted the right to censor photographs . . . As a professional, I respect that to a degree; she wanted to protect herself.

I myself censor photographs I take which might hurt a star's image . . . I have one shot of Marilyn in "The Seven Year Itch," where director Billy Wilder is trying to pull some lines out of her. I'd never show that print.

She made herself glamorous for the public. That's why she wanted censorship of my photos.

In the long run, in the battle with the big studios, in the battle for life, she lost . . .



*Columnist Sidney Skolsky (l.) chats with Marilyn
on the set of "The Seven Year Itch."*

SFA 00099

